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Letter dated 9 January 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I refer to my letter dated 7 December 2010 (S/2010/637) informing the President of the Security Council of the progress made by the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, and her reply dated 10 December 2010 (S/2010/638), in which she took note of my intention to continue the activities of the United Nations support team to the Mixed Commission with funding from the regular budget. In the same spirit, by the present letter, I would like to inform you of the latest achievements and activities undertaken by the Mixed Commission.

As you know, the United Nations established the Mixed Commission to facilitate the implementation of the 10 October 2002 ruling of the International Court of Justice on the Cameroon-Nigeria boundary and territorial disputes. Through my good offices, and with the support of the United Nations Secretariat, I have continued to facilitate the implementation of the ruling of the International Court of Justice.

The mandate of the Mixed Commission includes supporting the demarcation of the land boundary and delineation of the maritime boundary, facilitating the withdrawal and transfer of authority as appropriate, addressing the situation of affected populations and making recommendations on confidence-building measures. Achievements to date in the implementation of the ruling of the Court include the withdrawal and transfer of authority in the Lake Chad area (December 2003), along the land boundary (July 2004) and in the Bakassi Peninsula (initial withdrawal and transfer of authority in June 2006 and completion of the process in August 2008), as well as delineation of the maritime boundary (May 2007).

In the course of 2011, the Mixed Commission continued to facilitate the process peacefully, including by helping to maintain open dialogue and communication between the two countries. Following are some of the activities for which the United Nations support team to the Mixed Commission has provided substantive, technical and logistical support.

To date, out of the estimated 2,000 km, more than 1,700 km of the land boundary between the two countries have been demarcated, including 99.4 km of inaccessible areas in the Alantika Mountains through satellite imagery. In November 2011, the United Nations assisted an independent expert team in determining the boundary in the Mount Tosso area, which will be examined during the twenty-ninth session of the Mixed Commission, tentatively scheduled to take place in Yaoundé, on 1 and 2 March 2012.

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During the twenty-seventh session of the Mixed Commission, which took place in Yaoundé on 10 and 11 March 2011, the Mixed Commission concluded that the Working Group on the Maritime Boundary had fully accomplished its mandate. The Mixed Commission approved all of the recommendations of the Working Group, including the provisions for cross-border cooperation on hydrocarbon deposits straddling the maritime boundary.

During the twenty-eighth session of the Mixed Commission, which took place in Abuja, on 23 July 2011, the Mixed Commission reiterated its determination to complete the cartographic demarcation work by the end of 2012 and stressed the need for comprehensive planning of the completion of the remaining tasks, including the assessment of all boundary lines, the extraction of coordinates and the drawing of the final maps. For this purpose, it agreed that the demarcation work will formally be concluded with a boundary statement, to which a series of maps, elevated to the status of "legally-agreed maps", depicting the boundary line, will be appended. The statement, which will include an index of geographic and boundary coordinates resulting from the field assessment, will be the "binding source" for the demarcation of the Cameroon-Nigeria boundary.

Reports by United Nations civilian observers monitoring the situation along the land boundary and in the Bakassi Peninsula have concluded that the prevailing situation continues to be peaceful.

Meanwhile, the follow-up committee established by the 12 June 2006 Greentree Agreement continued its work following the final transfer of authority in the "zone" in the Bakassi Peninsula from Nigeria to Cameroon on 14 August 2008.

In 2011, three meetings of the follow-up committee were preceded by observer visits in the above-mentioned "zone". The Committee noted considerable improvement of the situation in the peninsula, as evidenced by the significant increase of the population and the good relations between the community and authorities. The United Nations is encouraging the parties to conclude a framework agreement, currently under discussion, to enhance security cooperation between the parties in a common effort to combat the growing threat of piracy and terrorism in the subregion.

Throughout 2011, the Mixed Commission continued to support the formulation of confidence-building measures for the welfare of affected populations and to promote initiatives aimed at enhancing trust between the two Governments and their peoples.

The United Nations country team in Cameroon, along with representatives of the Government of Cameroon, have identified four new confidence-building projects directly aimed at supporting border communities affected by the demarcation process. A similar needs assessment on the Nigerian side of the boundary line is scheduled to take place form 5 to 13 December 2012.

Completion of the bulk of the demarcation work will depend on the ability of the parties to reach agreement on the remaining areas of disagreement in a timely manner. Cameroon and Nigeria have agreed in particular that pillar emplacement work will continue beyond 2012.

After 2012, the following activities will conclude the work of the Mixed Commission:

(a) In line with the June 2006 Greentree Agreement and through the follow-up committee, monitoring the situation in the "zone" of the Bakassi Peninsula for the remainder of the five-year transitional period (August 2008-August 2013), during which special protection shall be granted to Nigerian residents;

(b) Facilitating the boundary pillar emplacement, financed by the trust fund, and promoting the replenishment of the trust fund through voluntary contributions;

(c) Implementing the exit strategy by handing over the activities of the Mixed Commission to the Joint Bilateral Commission and other subregional structures.

I would like to recall that, until 2003, the Mixed Commission was funded entirely from extrabudgetary funds. During the period from 2004 to 2011, the activities of the Mixed Commission were funded through the United Nations regular budget. The Governments of Austria, Brazil, Canada, Italy, Norway, Pakistan, Sweden and Uruguay have provided in kind contributions for the substantive and technical work of the Commission (military and legal experts), in addition to the logistical support provided by the Governments of Cameroon and Nigeria, and the voluntary contributions of both countries, as well as those of Canada, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union, to the trust fund for the demarcation activities.

Given the cost-effectiveness of the mission and the important tasks remaining at this juncture to help advance the peaceful implementation of the ruling of the International Court of Justice, it is my intention to ask for resources from the regular budget for the Mixed Commission for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2012.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon